

Confusing Camp Rich light here to stay

Caltrans has received several complaints about the pedestrian hybrid beacon installed at Camp Richardson on Highway 89. The perception has been that the beacon is causing major weekend backups.

The beacon will remain active this weekend and until further notice.

Caltrans conducted a two-day study on July 21-22 and determined the beacon isn't a major contributing factor to the weekend traffic backups. The state agency said once the limited beach parking fills up motorists are driving at slow speeds looking for shoulder parking along the highway, impeding the free flow of traffic.

But this isn't anything new during the summer. Locals would say it takes more than a two-day study. Traffic since the light went in has been worse, and the color scheme and blinking don't make sense.

Caltrans said it realizes motorists may be confused when experiencing the beacon for the first time. This is a relatively new pedestrian safety feature on California highways and the first of its kind installed in Lake Tahoe.

The beacon head consists of two red lenses above a single yellow lens. The beacon head is "dark" until a pedestrian desires to cross the street. There is no green light which people are used to.

A group of local agencies is working on short- and long-term remedies to speed the flow of traffic. In the mean time, people are stuck with the confusing beacon.

